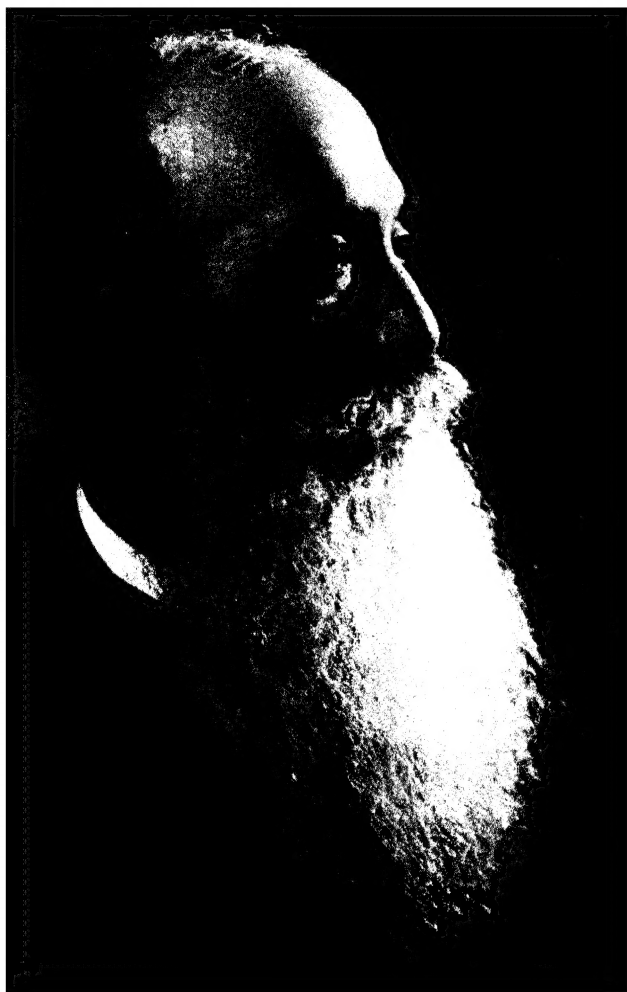


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SONGS IN EXILE

SONGS IN EXILE

BY

JOSEPH FURTADO

AUTHOR OF "A GOAN FIDDLER,"
"PRIMEIROS VERSOS," ETC.

1938

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PREFACE

It was hardly to be expected that these simple, old-style verses of mine would find favour with any publisher in a country where the fashion now is to invoke, not the ancient divinity of Mount Parnassus, but the ultra-modern, pseudo-Muse of the *Waste Land*. And what a poor source of inspiration! since the sorry creature, being herself without a spark of the divine fire, can do no more than arouse in her votaries a pedantic ambition to dazzle the reader by novel forms and phrases, which, after all, merely bore or bewilder him. My own allegiance continues firm as ever to the ancient divinity who has been so gracious to me all these years. Such being the case, the modernists are bound to condemn the *Songs in Exile* as too simple, perhaps even as simpler than anything since Wordsworth.

Of these eighty songs one half are entirely new; the other half, shown with an asterisk in the table of contents, have been taken from my published books and revised. The earliest of them (*The Neglected Wife*) was written thirty-five years ago, but the latest (*An Urdu Song*) only last year, at the age of sixty-five: I am now sixty-six.

My first volume appeared in 1895. Since then seven others have been published, every successive venture leaving me poorer and poorer and bringing me more and more the

sneers of the people among whom I move. One of them said of the present volume that it was absolutely uninteresting, and added: "Luckily nobody cares for your poetry." These sad experiences, however, have never affected the even tenor of my life; and despite them and poor circumstances I have—thanks to my Muse—enjoyed many occasions of exalted happiness.

September 1938

J. F.

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TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY SON FRANCIS
THE SUBJECT OF SOME OF MY CHILD POEMS

SONGS IN EXILE

THE PICTURE

Before my life there hung a picture,
And it was all my heart desired :
The paddy fields so fair they spread,
Each hill it raised its dreamy head
And dreamy thoughts inspired !

And on one hill was seen a cross,
And there, with arms about it, lay
A ragged child, and, hov'ring near,
A shadowy form that seemed to cheer
And call the child away.

But one sad night a storm arose,
And I awoke with nameless fears :
The fields and hills how changed they were !
No more the shadowy form was there,
The child lay pierced with spears !

VIA SACRA

When foes and seeming friends conspired
To load me with disgrace,
And some old women burst in tears
At seeing my blood-stained face,

A voice across the buried years
 Cried out in accents deep,
 "Ye daughters of Jerusalem,
 Weep not over me, but weep

For yourselves and for your children!"
 And right before me stood
 The churchyard with each cross, the folk,
 And the choir-master good.

Thus at the Via Sacra had
 He cried in tones benign,
 And touched the heart of everyone,
 Of everyone but mine.

Nay, I had mocked him, I alone
 Of all the pious throng;
 And, doubtless, in this wise at last
 Had Time avenged the wrong.

THE FLIGHT

Like a thief I slunk away.
 "Are you leaving us?"
 Asked the palm-trees, bending low.
 "He's deceiving us,"
 Cried the birds; "we too will go"—
 And they followed me.
 I heeded not but hung my head:
 My heart was dead in me;
 The world I loved was dead,
 The rest was naught to me—
 And like a thief I fled.

On the way I sold the house,
 For a bagatelle.
 "Judas! Judas!" croaked the crows,
 "Sure to burn in hell!"
 From his grave my father rose,
 Rose and followed me.
 I smote my breast, my dead heart bled
 And made the sign on me:
 Strange worlds before me spread,
 My world was lost to me—
 And like a Cain I fled.

SAY NO MORE

"On this bench you sat together,
 Always smiling, to each other."—
 Cruel memory, say no more.
 "Here's the courtyard where you gamboled,
 There the hillock where you rambled."—
 Cruel memory, say no more.
 "There the cross and cashew-tree."—
 Say no more, oh say no more—
 Would the earth were over me!

ACROSS THE GHATS.

Great hills upon great hills, you say,
 On every side they rise?
 One little hill 'tis all I see—
 O friend, cover mine eyes.

And houses scattered far and wide
 On every hill, you say?
 One little house 'tis all I see—
 Now close mine eyes, I pray.

And to and fro the folk they go?
 One man alone I see,
 A dead man too, he digs a grave—
 Dear friend, pray bury me.

THE FERRY

There stood but one hut
 And a temple all hoary,
 Though the harvest was near
 And the fields were in glory.

The ferryman free
 In his boat at the ferry
 (A merry man he)
 Was humming all merry.

The ferryman's wife
 Was the threshold adorning,
 And singing as sweet
 As a dhyal in the morning.

And the ferryman's child
 Came down to the jetty
 Crying, "Baksheesh, saib, baksheesh!"
 And the child was so pretty!

But soon crossing the stream,
 I wayworn and weary,
 It all passed like a dream—
 Oh the corner so cheery!

THE HYMN

As we three left the village
 We heard some children sing
 A hymn to Blessed Mary
 And the small church bell ring.
 "For pity stay a while,"
 My heart said with a smile;
 But Fate she would not stay,
 And dragged us both away.

Praise be to Blessed Mary!
 Across the hills and seas
 The hymn it followed us;
 And now, on every breeze,
 My heart and I can hear
 Its cadence just as clear:
 We turn to Fate and say,
 "Come drag the hymn away!"

MY FATHERLAND

Because of knaves and fools
 I fled my fatherland,
 My poor dear fatherland;
 Now with an aching heart
 I wander, far, apart.

Ah, what is this I see?
 Green hills on either hand—
 Green hills of my fatherland—
 They rise and stare at me!

Into this church I'll go
 And on my knees I'll pray,
 To Mary Mother pray;
 Such faith have I in prayer
 No hills shall rise up there.
 But what is that I see?
My mother! clear as day
 I see her kneel and pray—
 Oh it will madden me!

THE WHITE BIRD

Dedicated to my dear kinsmen Hipolito João Furtado
 and José Manuel Santana Furtado, through whose
 kindness my ancestral house has been restored to me.

What a God-forsaken place!
 Yet was it a pleasant valley,
 With the house where I was born
 And the gentle hill behind it,
 That but now I'd looked upon.
 And two owl-like birds from thither
 Came and perched upon the tree
 Right above, and, me beholding,
 With one voice they cried, "'Tis he!
 Wand'ring homeless seven years past—
 Now the white bird comes at last."
 Goranpoki birds were they, I know,

My good old grandaunt spoke about
 In the fairy tales she told us,
 Little children, long ago.

Strangely now my heart is throbbing;
 Sure enough the bird is coming,

Coming, coming, coming;
 I hear the flutter of its wings
 Above the bell my father rings,
 The bell of Candelaria!

And there I see the blessed Lady,
 On the altar see Her stand,
 Not wroth as last I saw Her,
 In my flight across the land,
 When She had chid me, saying:

"Why comest thou to Me?

If Heaven hath punished thee,
 As Heaven is to others

Thy country was to thee!"
 But full of love and pity.
 And the Christ-child in Her arms—

"Follow me! follow me!"—

He's smiling—look! and calling:

"Follow me! follow me!"

O sweet and clear

Upon mine ear

The Child's sweet words are falling—

"Follow me! follow me!"—

Waking hopes of bliss untold.

But, lo, what bird is this above me?—

"Follow me! follow me!"—

A silver bird with human voice?

Where's the blessed Child and Mother?—

"Follow me! follow me!"—
 Or hath the Child become a bird?
 Then why am I so strangely stirred,
 And the bird's voice like a balm
 It soothes my troubled heart?
 Yea, I'll follow thee, my little bird,
 Follow thee as once I followed,
 Across a lonesome wild
 For full seven years, a child;
 When at every step mine eyes
 Had had peeps at paradise.
 Gladly will I follow thee;
 But hasten not thus, I implore,
 Yea hasten not, good bird,
 For bare my feet are, bare and sore.
 •Look, e'en the wayside flowers
 They pity me, poor things:
 This balm misfortune brings;
 Not so in the happier years
 When I was wont to say,
 "Good morning, little ones!"
 And my eyes would fill with tears!
 What cared ye for an old man's greeting?
 And now we meet—how sad a meeting!
 Enough, enough, ye pity me!

"My son! my son!"—
 Sure I heard a voice!
 Or is it the winds that moan
 In yonder glen?—
 "My son! my son!"—
 There again!—and like mine own;
 The voice I feared yet live to bless—
 "My son! my son!"—

Thy voice, stern prophetess!
 Ah, hadst thou not prophesied,
 The deed I had not done;
 'Twas thy words, more than my pride,
 Impelled me and I fell:
 Forgive, forgive thy son!
 Lo, the mark upon my brow
 A wand'rer makes of me,
 So stern was Fate's decree,
 And stern as Fate wert thou.
 Yet, mother, it is well:
 Had not thy sternness made me strong,
 Could I my fate have borne so long?

Bird, what hill is this before us?
 Strange the hopes that rise in me.
 See how glad, though night's descending,
 See how glad I follow thee.—

Hark the bell!
 The bell of Candelaria!
 Well I know it, well;
 Would know it from a thousand others,
 The dear dear bell of Candelaria!—

*"Virgem Purissima,
 Senhora Mãe de Deus,
 Rogae á Jesus por nós!"*—
 And the hymn—the blessed hymn,
 Children sing, with joyful hearts,
 Before our Lady's shrine—
 How it swells upon the breeze,
 Then, floating down the hillside, comes
 And fills my heart with joy divine!

But what dear hill is this?

And how came I upon its side?
 Can it be the fateful hill
 Where Christ our Lord was crucified?
 Something, up the slope,
 Something like a cross I see,
 A white bird poised above....
 Not a cross but crucifix
 It hangs upon a wall,
 (The bird too is but a dove)
 And one on bended knee
 Before it....'tis a' hall....
 A room....my mother's room....
 There is she! my stern, pious mother
 (Stern, yet how dear!),
 A censer in her hand—
 What sweet perfume!—
 How came I here?....
 Doth she not see me? yet I feel
 She knoweth I am near
 (Beside her let met go and kneel)
 Or seeth and doth not care?—
 O thoughtless one!
 Did she e'er turn aside from prayer?—
 And, now she prayeth for her son,
 The house might fall about her ears,
 Never will she turn, O never!....
 But what is this she's doing?....hath done?—
 O mine eyes they are blind with tears....
 With ashes from the censer she
 Hath crossed the mark upon my brow—
 Hath crossed it out for ever!....

What sweet sensations thrill me now!
 What visions beautiful I see!....

That's my sire, my gentle sire,
 Ringing the bell,
 The dear dear bell of Candelaria !.
 And those others they must be
 Forbears of mine
 Eager all to welcome me....
 Children, angels, seraphim .
 Sing the blessed blessed hymn—
 O the melody divine!....

TO AN ANGEL

Child, when you dropped down from the sky
 Into mine arms with many a cry,
 Where was I, my child,
 Where was I
 When you dropped down from the sky?...
 Upon a lonesome wild.

Child, when I look into your eyes
 My heart it thrills with sweet surprise,
 What do I see, dear child,
 What do I see
 When I look into your eyes?...
 A garden undefiled.

And from that garden these sweet flowers
 Were plucked while there I strolled for hours :
 Take them all, my Sweet,
 Take them all,
 From that garden these sweet flowers—
 I lay them at your feet.

VENITE, ADOREMUS

Babe of Bethlehem,
We're children from the Foundling Home
Come joyful to adore Thee :
Gifts have we none, but take our hearts—
Our hearts we lay before Thee.

Babe of Bethlehem,
We held a lantern in the dark
And cried, "Behold the Star !
Come hasten, hasten as they did—
The kings who came from far."

Babe of Bethlehem,
We find Thee, lo, in a poor shed
(They found us on the street),
Yet art Thou happy, so are we—
And kiss Thy little feet.

A CRADLE SONG

Please teach me, mother dear,
A pretty cradle song,
And short and sweet, not long;
But with a neat neat rhyme,
And with a sweet sweet chime;
To sing in the ear ear ear
Of baby dear dear dear—
To sing it all the time
And make him go to sleep.

O look now, mother dear,
 How baby in sweet surprise
 He opens wide his eyes
 To hear the song I make
 For sweet sweet baby's sake;
 To sing in the ear ear ear
 Of baby dear dear dear—
 To sing it when awake
 And make him go to sleep.

O hear now, mother dear,
 What baby has to say—
 He wants to fly away;
 He's quite as big as I,
 Says he, and means to fly
 On these his wee wee feet,
 And hands so sweet sweet sweet.—
 Now where does baby cry?
 Poor baby's fast asleep.

DREAMS IN CHILDHOOD

Dear mother, now in heaven,
 A dreamy child she thought me,
 But bless my happy childhood
 And the sweet dreams it brought me!

If mother woke up early,
 When birds to song are given,
 I pleaded, "Do not wake me,
 I hear the birds in heaven."

UNDER THE MANGO-TREE

You are so tall,
O mango-tree!
We are so small,
O mango-tree!
Your mangoes all
Red ripe we see—
Do let them fall,
Dear mango-tree!

Come winds, come blow!
This mango-tree
Won't pity show
Though we hungry be;
Blow winds and throw
The fruit we see;
Blow, dear winds, blow!—
There!—one, two, three!

WHEN I WAS A CHILD

My world was once within four hills
And I therein a pet;
The sun it rose behind one hill,
Behind another set.

The moon, the sky, and all the stars,
I thought, were not so far;
Indeed sometimes I talked to them,
And counted every star.

And all the people they were kind,
And most of children good;
And many a child would come to play,
And some would come for food.

'Twas nice to see them come and go,
But nicer, I must say,
To see the pig come grunting home
To mother's *ay! ay! ay!*

The pig it was my dearest pet,
Though birds, and dogs and cats
I liked them much, but know not why
I screamed at sight of rats.

And there was one I did not like—
An ugly drunkard man—
And, if I saw him passing by,
Inside the house I ran.

He dug the graves and rung the bell,
And said they, one and all,
That none could ring so well as he,
At feast or funeral.

But best I liked the beggarmen,
I liked to give them rice;
In small but many handfuls gave—
So nice I felt, so nice.

And when the feast of flowers came round,
That came but once a year,
I went with flowers to church, and knelt
And prayed with father dear.

I knelt and prayed to *Mãe de Deus*
 That I all good might be;
 Then threw the flowers about Her feet,
 And sweet She smiled on me.

Now gone is all the joy of life,
 And this the greater pain:
 Whate'er I be I ne'er can be
 That happy child again.

GREETINGS

At sunrise o'er the hills
 As I go a-whistling gay,
 The birds from many a tree,
 "Good-morning, poet!" they say.
 It thrills me so, that I
 Can hardly make reply,
 But in my heart I bless them.

At sunset I return
 A-thinking all the way,
 And, to the birds about,
 "Good-night, dear birds!" I say.
 If none of them replies
 Because of heavy eyes,
 Sure in their hearts they bless me.

HOW THE CORN GROWS

One autumn morn'
 I chanced to cross

A field of corn;
And there it was,
That blessed morn,
To sinful me
The grace was given
On earth to see
The ways of Heaven :
I saw a bird
And heard a voice
I ne'er before
Had seen or heard.
I did rejoice,
Yet with my joy
Was holy awe
At what I saw ;
And what I said
I know not well,
For, strange to tell,
I instantly
Was on my knee.

The bird saw too,
Yet did not stir ;
And, "Who are you
To ask me, sir?"
It said, and I
Did thus reply,
Grown bolder now,
I know not how :
"An untaught poet
Of trees and birds,
Whom no man knoweth,
And, wanting words,
But dreams and sings

Of simple things.”—

“Peace! all Heaven knoweth;
From Heaven come I:
Come, simple poet,”
The bird rejoined.

So I drew nigh
And heard it say,
That blessed day,
To an ear of corn,
A tiny ear
Then newly born:
“Grow quick, my dear!
There’s dearth and death
On every hand,
In every breath
Upon this land—
Grow quick, my dear!”

Then was revealed
At every ear,
Throughout the field,
A bird, and clear
A voice, “Spare, spare!”
Was it my prayer
That blessed morn
While I did cross
The field of corn?
Perchance it was:
To sinful me
Such grace was given—
On earth to see
The ways of Heaven!

SALISBURY PARK
(Poona, India)

When the first time I
Crossed Salisbury Park,
There was nobody there,
But alone in the sky
Was singing a lark :
We two from the world were apart—
The bird in the sky,
Upon the earth I—
And a strange joy played round my heart !

THE FARMER'S WIFE

A small green hill, an evenfall,
And, swaying upon a thorn,
A bulbul—to its mate doth call :
Delighted I look on.—
How soft and tranquil all !

Who comes?—A woman young and fair,
A child against her hip;
Sweet mogras round the knot of hair,
A lilt upon her lip.—
How sweet is all the air !

Upon the ground the child she lays
And plucks the cashews red :
Some farmer's wife, but the sun's rays
A glory round her shed.—
Happy must be her days !

TO MONSOON BUTTERFLIES

Welcome, pretty butterflies
 Coming gaily through the skies;
 In a distant land I roam,
You are coming from my home,
You are coming from the south—
 Come now kiss me on the mouth :
 You did kiss my little one
 While he played out in the sun;
 Come then kiss me on the mouth,
You are coming from the south.

Come, ye dear ones, bring us rain,
 Come and gladden hill and plain;
 It was *he* had told me all—
 With your coming rain must fall—
 Come now kiss me for his sake,
 Take a thousand kisses, take :
 Father dear is dead and gone,
I am left here all forlorn;
 Come then kiss me for his sake,
 Take a thousand kisses, take.

THE STRAY MONSOON BUTTERFLY

Poor dear butterfly !
 It has lost its way,
 Knows not what to do;
 Lost its poor head too—
 Just as I too may—
 'Mid these flats and wires.

Poor dear butterfly !
 Gay had left its home,
 Safe had crossed the sea,
 Sad its thoughts must be—
 Worse than wild sea foam
 Finds the homes of men.

Pretty butterfly,
 No more flights now take
 Lest thou break thy wings
 'Gainst these horrid things,
 And my heart too break—
 With thy broken wings.

Pretty butterfly,
 Glad I'll shelter thee;
 Come and take thy rest
 Safe upon my breast;
 Come, O come to me
 That so love thy kind.

TO THE DHYAL

Though many a bird of brighter wing
 There be and some that sweeter sing,
 And the birds I love be many,
 Yet I love thee best of any,
 For ne'er was bird to man, I ween,
 What thou, dear bird, to me hast been.

I loved thy song from cradle days,
 And oft I tried to sing thy praise:
 All my childhood thou didst brighten,

All my burdens thou didst lighten,
 And this return I make to thee
 Is naught beside thy gifts to me.

Each morn and eve, this many a year,
 I've sought this place thy song to hear :
 Though my hopes of fame have fled now,
 And my dreams of life be dead now,
 Thank God, one blessing still is mine—
 Thy gentle self—then why repine?

THE MUNIAS' NEST

In the valley as I rambled,
 Sad with thoughts of childhood days,
 Though the birds sung loud about me,
 How could they my spirits raise?
 All they sung was, "Never, never
 Will return thy childhood days."

Then I saw a pair of munias—
 Happy as birds in paradise—
 Make a nest, and sadness left me,
 Changing so my heart and eyes,
 One wild moment I a child was,
 And this earth a paradise.

THE SECRET

Every year thou flowerest, tamarind,
 And the sunbirds seek thee as of old;
 Every day gay children, tamarind,

Come to gambol round thee as of old;
 And, lo, every hour of every day
 All these years I've waited, tamarind—
 Be thou silent to the last, I pray;
 It was all so fated, tamarind.
 Pride consumes him, said they, tamarind,
 And no pity had they, tamarind;
 Thou the secret keep now, tamarind,
 Keep it till all secrets are made known,
 For I go to sleep now, tamarind,
 Till o'er all the trumpet's blown!

AN URDU SONG

You ask me how I am
 But I make no reply;
 You think me unpolite—
 I'm simply shy.

You take my hand in yours
 And tears come to mine eye;
 You call me timid dove—
 I'm simply shy.

You raise your eyes to mine
 But I look down and sigh;
 You fear I do not love—
 I'm simply shy.

TO A CHORUS GIRL

It was the star I'd longed to see,
Not you, poor chorus girl.
While she unblushing gazed at me
You made a gesture full of grace
And with your saree veiled your face—
That haunts me night and day.

Her face is bright, but yours is sweet,
So sweet, dear chorus girl,
I fain would kiss your very feet.
Her beauty may the senses charm,
Yours to my heart will be like balm—
And soothe it night and day.

LONG TIME AGO

I knew a sweet maiden
With beautiful eyes,
Long time ago;
I have seen many eyes
But no pair like hers—
They haunt me so!

She lived on the field side
In a mean little hut,
Long time ago;
I lived on the hill side
In a clean little house—
And hence mine woe.

And never the sun rose,
 And never the sun set,
 Long time ago—
 No matter what weather—
 But found us together,
 And watched us grow.

Two light-hearted children
 With smiles we had parted,
 Long time ago;
 Of partings and pain,
 Of life and its struggles,
 What could we know?

I am seated now lone
 On the steps we sat on,
 Long time ago—
 Oh to see once again
 The beautiful eyes
 That haunt me so!

THE MULLAH'S DAUGHTER

Because the mosque upon the mainland
 Is much too far away,
 The Moslems now have one on th'island,
 And full five times can pray.
 A sorry fellow is their mullah,
 But oh the mullah's daughter!

As oft I stand the mosque admiring—
 Conceit it makes them blind—
 They think that I have Moslem leanings,

The mullah too is kind.
 A sorry fellow though the mullah,
 Quite peri-like's his daughter.

"No trifling, saib, with Moslem beauties;
 My daughter can be thine—
 Be first a Moslem," says the mullah,
 "And give up pork and wine."
 A sorry fellow is that mullah,
 But I mean have his daughter.

THE PARIAH GIRL

I see her every day—
 And ne'er without a thrill—
 The sylph-like pariah girl
 Returning from the mill.

Oh let the Brahmin say
 Her touch would taint his soul;
 I'll strike my breast and hope
 The touch will make me whole.

When first I spoke to her
 In arms she held a child.
 "Is that your child?" I'd asked.—
 "No," she'd replied—and smiled.

That smile hath me undone
 And gives my mind no rest,
 With thinking if ever I
 Shall press her to my breast.

DREAMS OF LIFE

Such dreams were mine,
Though late in autumn they come true,
When leaves are yellow
And pleasures mellow;
But wonders too the gods will do
When dreams, like mine,
Are nigh divine.

Now all day long
Content I sit, and dream I hear
The palm-trees shady
Praising my lady,
Whose anklets dear keep jingling near,
And out, ere long,
There comes a song.

And glad feel I
When at my feet she takes her seat,
And reads out stories
Of Vedic glories,
And makes my dreams of life complete,
With hopes long I
Might death defy.

THE STRANGER

When the shades of night were falling,
And the birds each other calling
In the trees and temple caves,
While the folk, with jest and laughter,
Slowly home returned with sheaves—

Softly, like a serpent gliding,
 Came he through the bylanes hiding.—
 Beware, my child, beware!

All the village, lost in wonder,
 Round the stranger stood to ponder
 What might be his creed and land,
 Since not one among the pundits
 Could his language understand;
 But so strangely sung and played he,
 Of their hearts mere playthings made he.—
 Beware, my child, beware!

Village matrons veiling faces,
 Village maids robed like the Graces,
 On their way to or from the well,
 Round the stranger long would loiter:
 While their bosoms rose and fell
 At each word he sung or uttered,
 How their wild doves leapt and fluttered!—
 Beware, my child, beware!

Once the rajah, flaunting sashes,
 And his bride with drooping lashes,
 Riding past, had paused to hear:
 Why so pale had turned the stranger?
 Had his looks not shown some fear?
 Sure his voice had strangely altered,
 Sure his fingers too had faltered.—
 Beware, my child, beware!

When the day was slowly breaking,
 And the birds each other waking,
 Loud was heard the palace gong.

Dumb with terror was the village—
 Why the mournful tale prolong?
 Great my dread when love-light flashes,
 As in thee, through drooping lashes.—
 Beware, my child, beware!

THE NEGLECTED WIFE
(A Goa Song)

Three years this day, nor more nor less,
 Though married I have been,
 I know not yet what's marriage like,
 And now I'm past eighteen;
 And this young age creates a rage
 Of such desires, upon my breast
 This end of saree *will not* rest.

My husband he to Bombay went
 Now three years and a day :
 He writes but seldom, never writes
 When home return he may—
 While all declare I'm young and fair ;
 But what is beauty, youth to me,
 Deprived of love and liberty?

On Sundays, when to church I go,
 For love, not God, I yearn ;
 The young men there they smile to me,
 And I their smiles return.
 May God forgive the life I live,
 But when I think upon my lot
 I can't suppress the sinful thought.

Last week I went to a wedding feast;
 The young man I dined beside
 And danced with once he danced and said,
 "Would that you were my bride!"
 I felt so glad, I felt so sad,
 But felt too shy to make reply,
 And tear on tear came to mine eye.

This morning I confessed in hopes
 Some comfort I might win:
 Fool that I was! the cold old priest
 Sees naught besides my sin.
 I feel so sad, I feel so bad,
 May God upon me pity take—
 I feel my heart is like to break!

BRAHMIN GIRLS

I've seen the East, I've seen the West,
 And truth it bids me this declare,
 Of all the girls the Brahmin girls
 Are fairest of the fair:
 The Brahmin girls, the Brahmin girls,
 The Brahmin girls so fair,
 Upon their nose the ring of pearls
 And jasmine in their hair.

No more your Lauras, Kates or Jeans,
 Your eyes of blue or locks of gold;
 Mohini sweet, a girl as sweet
 I never shall behold;
 Mohini sweet, Mohini neat,
 So madd'ning to behold,

With *kinning chinning* round her feet
And *fas fis* of her fold.

I met a girl at Nasik fair,
A Brahmin girl of beauty rare,
She smiled so sweet when I did greet
As bade me not despair;
But said all rude—confound the prude,
She'll drive me to despair—
“Before I wed go shave your head,
All save a tuft of hair.”

TO GRAY-EYES

What hour the dear birds go to roost
I come to you, Gray-Eyes:
A witching hour indeed, but not
So witching as you, Gray-Eyes.

What time the moon shines bright and full
I gaze on you, Gray-Eyes:
The moon I find it fair, but not
So fair as you, Gray-Eyes.

When first the dew-drops kiss the rose
I too kiss you, Gray-Eyes:
Ah sweet is then the rose, but not
So sweet as you, Gray-Eyes.

Though not a few to me are dear—
Just as to you, Gray-Eyes—
Not one is dear as you: am I
As dear to you, Gray-Eyes?

SPRING IS COMING!

All day long a voice keeps humming,
 "Spring is coming! spring is coming!"
 But no joy there comes to me.
 All in flower silk-cotton trees
 Every side I see them rise,
 Full of starlings, mynas, crows
 Sipping honey with merry cries :
 "Spring is coming! spring is coming!"
 Yet no joy there comes to me;
 No joy comes because of thee—
 False Gray-Eyes, because of thee!

THE LETTER

Five years this day
 I came away
 From her I love,
 And for whose sake
 I'd made my foe
 The world below
 And heaven above,
 Though Christ had come between us.

My parting threat
 She'd smiled thereat
 With cruel disdain,
 So glad was she
 The way was clear
 For one more dear
 I might have slain,
 Had Christ not come between us.

Five years—five years
 Of sighs and tears—
 And never a token;
 Nor, till her love
 Is off his head
 And worse than dead,
 The silence broken,
 For Christ had come between us.

In words that bite
 She dares now write:
 "I know you're good—
 For love of Christ
 Forgive, forget,
 And trust me yet;"
 And fain I would,
 But Christ will come between us.

A DOUBLE DREAM

She was making her toilet,
 When I stole from behind
 And covered her eyes;
 And I read in the mirror,
 "She loveth thee duly
 Or this blush would not rise;"
 And I read on her mind,
 "Had he loved me not truly,
 Would he come from behind
 And cover mine eyes?"

To myself then said I:
 "It was only a dream,

And the serpent seen there
 Awaiting to bite me,
 And my true love resembling,
 All empty as air—
 When are dreams what they seem?"
 And I woke up a-trembling :
 It was only a dream,
 And the serpent was there !

LOVE AND PRIDE

Dance and music in the house !
 Far from fair, they think, the bride ;
 One fair woman's all I see,
 Sad at heart she waits for me :
 Short the road to reach her side—
 Why not let old by-gones be ?
 Thy pride may prove the curse of thee.

Wine and cheers within the hall !
 Bride and groom a happy pair !
 One sad woman's all I see,
 Sighs and waits in vain for me :
 Haste, thou wretch, and soothe the fair—
 Why prolong this agony ?
 Thy pride may prove the death of thee.

TABLES TURNED

So glad I made her suffer !
 Won't she burst now into tears
 At sight of me, cruel-hearted,

Made her suffer six long years!
 But gladly she'll forgive me
 Soon as I have kissed her tears.

But here's the house, an angel's:
 Enter we now heaven, my heart....
 Good God—a bride and bridegroom!
 Soft the glances she doth dart.
 I'd feel it less, cruel woman,
 Hadst thou stabbed me to the heart!

THE BROKEN HEART

You have broken my heart, Gray-Eyes,
 And I die ere my time:
 God forgive you the crime!
 But I won't tarry there,
 Be the place e'er so fair
 And called heaven or paradise.
 What am I to do there?
 I want nothing but you, Gray-Eyes.
 So mind, you cruel woman, mind:
 When dressing your hair
 I will come from behind
 And cover your eyes.

LIMBO

If e'er I sneered at mother
 When I found her praying
 That heathens might be Christians,
 She would chide me, saying:

“You know not, son, of limbo
 Where the heathens go;
 Naught like its awful darkness
 Find we here below.

To think of human beings
 Doomed to such a fate!”—
 “Or,” thoughtless I would break in,
 “Kicked from heaven’s gate!

Nay, rather be a heathen
 And in darkness dwell
 Than be a Christian burning
 In the fires of hell.”

At this retort poor mother,
 With her eyes to heaven,
 Would strike her breast, imploring
 I might be forgiven.

But I did truly mean it,
 And of limbo thought
 As of a cave with benches,
 Nor so sad the lot

But, God a comrade granting
 Either side of me,
 I might, in friendly converse,
 Pass eternity....

Last night I died, a heathen,
 And in limbo rose,
 And found myself—oh horror!—
 ’Tween my deadliest foes.

CUMBALLA
(Near the Mahalakshmi Battery)

Not all my life is quite so dreary
 But that a day can make it cheery.
 Thus thinking I, each Saturday,
 To dear Cumballa take my way;
 Cumballa, where I make this ditty,
 A pretty place in Bombay city,
 Where come, all graceful as the Graces,
 Brahmin girls with sandalled feet,
 And English *mems.* with painted faces,
 Fondling each a poodle sweet;
 Where bustling ayahs, running after
 Naughty *babs* in pinafore,
 Oft make the Tommies burst in laughter—
 Such their English terms galore.
 Ah, dear Cumballa, what a pity
 I must leave thy pleasant shore,
 And ducks and pomfrets, dear dear city,
 I shall taste them nevermore!

TO THE MANDОВI

Take it not ill, I entreat thee,
 That with no raptures I greet thee,
 Dear River Mandovi:
 Careworn and weary I meet thee,
 Dear River Mandovi.

Many great churches adorn thee,
 Many bright sons have been born thee—
 God prosper all, Mother!—

Who among them looked so upon thee
As I do, O Mother?

Some for thy rich leaping treasure,
Others with motives of pleasure,
May love thee, Mandovi;
Who loves thee, as I beyond measure,
For thy own sake, Mandovi?

Ne'er a year passed but I sought thee,
Ne'er a night came but it brought thee
In dreams to me, Mother;
Rev'rently now I have wrought thee
A love-wreath, O Mother!

Poor though the gift, like the giver,
All my heart goes with it, River,
Dear River Mandovi;
Goes to thee, now and for ever,
O Mother Mandovi!

MY NATIVE LAND

Hills and valleys everywhere,
On each hill a cross or shrine,
In each valley cots and farms:
Other lands may be as fair,
Yet what land, what land but mine,
Is so blest with homely charms?
Land of palm and cashew-tree,
Dear as life art thou to me!

SWEET HOME

A little hill with cashew-trees,
And on its slope a little cot,
With sweet and tender memories
Buzzing like bees about the spot :
My feet may wander where they will,
My heart ne'er leaves the little hill !

THE CHOIR-MASTER

Ne'er came Death into our village
But it brought me grace ;
I would join the sad procession
To the resting-place.

Then I heard the dear choir-master
(Old was he and kind)
Chanting deep the *Miserere*
Brought me peace of mind.

Such the peace, at every burial,
"May he live," said I,
"Live to chant the *Miserere*
O'er me when I die !"

Now that comfort 'tis denied me,
Wherefore, God knows best :
This sad day the good old master
He was laid to rest !

THE VILLAGE COWBOY

He haunts me yet—the little boy—
With cries of pain or songs of joy;
At break of day he took our cows,
And as he went from house to house
He sung, the merry boy.

“Boys,” every morn would mother say,
“There’s Pedro singing—rise and pray.”
And never rose we from the bed
But prayed that Pedro might be dead.
We did, indeed, so pray,

Until one morn it came to pass
A snake lay hiding in the grass
And bit him, and, for all they tried,
The boy in agonies he died:
They moaned, “Alas! alas!”

’Tis many a year, the same old way
The village goes, and ever may;
But as I tread each quiet lane
The poor boy’s cries I hear again—
Would he were live to-day!

RUZAI

I would my sleep had endless been,
So had my joy been endless too;
I saw him spread the altar cloth,
As here on earth he used to do.

The village tailor was Ruzai,
He made no more than common clothes;
Such things as tail-coats dreaded he,
And ladies' frocks with furbelows.

What though he worked from dawn to dusk,
The village folk they thought him slow.—
“And were I quicker,” he would say,
“Could I to heaven the quicker go?”

No, quick or slow, 'tis all the same;
Our days on earth they are but four;
Yet those who serve the Church may hope—
Pray make me sacristan, senhôr.”—

I then was just a little lad,
But soon as I became a man
Ruzai attained his heart's desire,
For he became our sacristan.

Oft did I watch him serve at Mass
Or put the sacred vestments by;
Long in the vestry lingered he,
And never left without a sigh.

I would my sleep had endless been
Or good Ruzai had been my guide,
These torments then would not be mine;
In peace could I have lived and died.

THE COBRA

Never before, in all these years,
Had he appeared by day,
Though known to hide among the stones
That near the jack-tree lay.

But oft had he at night been seen—
A terror to all around—
The deadly cobra, for whose bite
A cure may not be found.

So folk, though come with sticks and stones,
Affrighted back have hung:
With hood spread out the snake has stopped
And shoots his forky tongue.

Here from the crowd a fearless boy
Darts forth—beware, beware!
But one deft stroke and all is o'er—
A writhing form lies there.

Now safe the good old sacristan
To church at night may go;
Nor need again walk past the tree
With wary steps and slow.

And, good folk, give ye thanks to God
Hath rid ye of this bane,
And ask not what *his* murmurs mean—
The fool will never explain.

A GOOD FRIDAY

When his corse they lowered no bell was ring—
Gone for ever!— [ing—
 Only people, in the church, 'were singing
Stabat Mater;
 Yet from every quarter winds came sighing
Gone for ever!
 Where upon the floor a child was lying—
 Faint, poor child, with pain and crying,
 Faint as ever!

Two score years and still the words are ring—
Gone for ever!— [ing—
 Still the people, in the church, are singing
Stabat Mater;
 And they will until mine hour of dying—
Gone for ever!—
 'Tis an iron fate I am defying—
 Would I too in the grave were lying,
 Quiet for ever!

VISHNULAL

"I'm sorry, Vishnual, though jewels
 Full many you've in store,
 The jewel I prize you never show."—
 "What jewel mean you, senhôr?"—
 "Your daughter, Vishnual."—

"Just wait awhile, I'll call her out—
 . Is Savitri not there?"
 When soon a child of ten appeared,

And she was more than fair,
The child of Vishnual.

No goldsmith round about but sure
A scoundrel born was he,
And cheated friend and foe alike;
Yet soon I came to be
A friend of Vishnual.

And oft to him said I: "Think not
I flatter or deride,
But truly, friend, she's fair enough
To be a rajah's bride,
Your daughter, Vishnual."

A lonely man was I, and fear
Lest Fate should make us part
Would steal upon me—Oh the child
Brought sunshine to my heart,
The child of Vishnual.

But now it so befell there came
A scourge upon the land,
And cries of mourning, night and day,
Were heard on every hand.—
I feared for Vishnual.

Nor long did Fate delay—one morn,
Though deaths had then been few,
Above the women's wail there rose
What pierced my poor heart through,
This cry of Vishnual:

"Gone, gone—the rajah's bride—senhôr!

So true had come my fears....
 A lonely man am I, and still
 That cry rings in mine ears,
 The cry of Vishnulal.

BIRDS AND NEIGHBOURS

When I was young and went all day
 Bird's-nesting, oft would neighbours say,
 "The birds will be his ruin."

'Tis not with age my hair are gray,
 And well the birds might turn and say,
 "'Tis all his neighbours' doing."

THE PROPHET !

A man there was, had travelled wide,
 Would come and sit all day
 In our *balcão*, and tell with pride
 Of countries far away.

And, if he caught me, as oft he did,
 Coming from stream or hill,
 He'd shake his head, would shake his head
 And say, "Do what you will,

My friend, I fear this child of yours,
 If once he leave his home,
 His home and all he will forget,
 And only love to roam."

Right well remember I his words,
 And how my sire he'd sigh:
 The prophet! were he living now,
 He'd find his words a lie.

I've travelled far, I've travelled wide,
 The Ghats and Ganges seen,
 But ne'er my village hills or streams
 Less dear to me have been.

THE LAST OF THEM

Only a poor old peasant dead,
 The last of all the rustic band;
 And yet the news hath made me sad:
 Is it because he tilled our land?—
 I seldom was so sad before.

Is it because he gave me joy
 When drinking grog before our door,
 And said, "Go fetch some pickle, boy"?
 Now grog and pickle are no more—
 I seldom was so sad before.

Is it because he wished me well
 And gave me welcome to my land?—
 And gave it first?—I cannot tell:
 I'll shake no more a peasant's hand—
 I seldom was so sad before.

BYGONE DAYS

All day I ramble on the hills
Or loiter by the haunted rills,
 As in the days gone by :
The sweet birds all they sing as light,
The wild flowers too they blow as bright,
 As in the days gone by—
 Why rise tears to mine eye?

A LESSON

It was a pleasant morn
 And birds were piping gaily,
So pleasant was my walk—
 I love to take it daily.

And on my walk I met
 A woman—looked so wily—
Had oranges for sale,
 And her I questioned dryly :

“How much for one? no lies.”—
 “Look, saib, to speak untruly
Four pice one, truly three;
 And, mind, I plucked them newly”.—

“Three pice for one! two pice
 Are quite enough,” I told her.—
“And nothing for myself,
 Big saib? Are you not older,

And richer? why not then
 Be kinder, saib, and wiser?"
 The woman asked, and home
 Came I the less a miser.

And thus on every walk,
 While birds keep piping gaily,
 In some such pleasant talk
 I learn a lesson daily.

THE BIDEE-MAKERS

The bidee-makers! every day
 I see them, quiet they toil away.

A little leaf,
 A little stuff—
 O not so much,
 Enough, enough—
 A little twist,
 A little thread,
 A little bidee*—
 A little bread!

All seated in a ring or row,
 Upon the floor or in the loft,
 They work, and chat, in tones but low :
 Now what is it they say?—O soft!
 "There goes the poor old man!"—the dears!—
 A fountain, in a vale of tears!
 I pity them, they pity me—
 How good, O world, couldst thou not be!

*Indian cigarette.

Poor bidee-makers! on return
 I see them still, though lights then burn.
 Two score bidees
 Mean three pice won;
 Now in one day
 How many done?
 Just twenty score,
 That's thirty pice—
 Is that enough
 To feed the mice?*

At last one woman, rising, cries,
 "My noura[†] anxious he might be."
 Another rises then and sighs,
 "My children too they'll wait for me."
 And there they go, the pair of them—
 And wouldst thou kiss their garments' hem?
 A little love, and ne'er a wife
 Or mother will she tire of life.

THE MILKMAN'S HUT

Where this unsightly pile now stands
 There stood, not long ago,
 A hut—I wonder what I meant
 To tell you, friend, or show.

A pigmy's hut, you might have thought,
 It had so small a door;
 But, what with plantain-trees behind,
 A tulsi-plant before,

*Among Indians a term of endearment applied to little children.

†Bridegroom or young husband.

And, either side the tulsi-plant,
 A guava-tree and palm,
 The milkman's hut—for such it was—
 Had quite a homely charm.

And many an evening did I come,
 Despising every care,
 To feast mine eyes upon this place
 And breathe its pleasant air.

But come away, these simple things
 Few heed or understand;
 'Tis city sights you come to see—
 And city sights are grand!

MERCY

What a lovely day!
 Fresh a breeze is blowing
 Across the earth,
 And, from my heart,
 Full the fountain flowing,
 Of joy and mirth.

What now, over there,
 Are the children doing,
 Around the tree?
 Looks like kittens playing,
 Playing around and mewing:
 We'll go and see.

All around its trunk
 Sugar they are throwing

For ants to eat—
Poor little ants!—
Only mercy showing—
They find it sweet.

And the little ones
What may they be saying?
Naught can I hear,
But, in your heart,
Gay the fountain playing—
Come near, come near.

THE DEAR HILLSIDE

Mansions, mansions all around—
Not one cottage anywhere!
Oh to see the dear old spot
With my own neat little cot
On the dear hillside!

Cars and gramophones all day—
Don't they drive me to despair!
Oh to hear the cattle lowing
And his pipe the herd-boy blowing
On the dear hillside!

Strangers, strangers every side—
From the windows how they stare!
Oh to feel the fresh green grass
One sweet hour with my own sweet lass
On the dear hillside!

MY FRIENDS

My friends are more than I can tell;

I give here only three.

'The first he blows the bugle well,

A bugle-master he.

I meet him each and every day

Where they the bugles blow;

He brings his child and makes him say,

"Big saib, how far you go?"

The child, now comely to my mind,

Was otherwise before;

And somehow day by day, I find,

I like the urchin more.

Another friend, and very dear,

With a tray large and round,

He sits and sweetmeats sells, anear

Saint Mary's Church compound.

With *laddoos* for my child, one day,

After me did he run;

I took the *laddoos*—naught did pay,

Rememb'ring Mary's Son.

The third of friends (you'll scarce believe)

Though lame I love him best;

Nay, should he fail to come one eve,

My heart it hath no rest.

FATHER HEGGLIN, S. J.

Here comes good Father Hegglin,
Umbrella under arm:
No, please, I may not meet him,
My pride it takes alarm.

'Tis all that urchin's doing—
Sudden he came and said,
"Mother says you're my father;
Please, father, give some bread."

I laughed!—the Lord forgive me!
I stood the church within,
They outside—couldn't have seen me,
Yet *he* might see the sin.

"Yes, everybody's father,"
Poor Father Hegglin said,
His face all strange and radiant;
"Come, lad, I'll give you bread."

I'll hide behind this pillar;
He never looks around:
His thoughts are up in heaven,
His eyes are on the ground.

I'll hide myself and watch him;
It somehow does me good...
Yes, I must try (God help me!)
To live as good men should.

NO REST HAVE I

No rest have I—all night
 My spirit goes a-wandering;
 Into a speck of dust he turns
 And whirls away, a tiny thing;
 For something seeks, for something yearns,
 And flies and flies and flies
 From star to star,
 Away, afar;
 At times exultant cries,
 "I feel it on this cheek of mine,
 I feel it glow—the touch divine!"
 And home returns and makes a rhyme,
 Or sits in silence all the time.

No rest have I—one night
 He sought in haste a prison cell
 Where, raging like a wild beast, lay
 A felon doomed to death and hell,
 And at his feet begun to pray:
 "Cry thou for mercy, friend,
 You'll mercy find;
 God's just but kind,
 God's mercy hath no end;
 Repent, repent, and be forgiven;
 He'll close down hell and open heaven."
 But oh the terror I was in
 While he stood near that man of sin!

No rest have I—last week
 He tended flocks at Bethlehem,
 And thence brought home some singing birds;
 Now what, oh what have I with them,

These singing birds and flocks or herds?
 No good these birds will bring,
 For in my breast
 They've made a nest,
 And night and day they sing.
 And how am I to earn my bread?
 How long shall I be manna-fed?
 No rest they give me night or day:
 Good Angel, take the birds away.

A REMINDER

One morn, beneath a roadside tree
 Where I had sate me down,
 I saw a fellow—seemed to me
 Much like a country clown—

A thick and coarse chapatti* make
 Upon a smouldering fire.
 No cooking pot or pan had he,
 Nor did perhaps require;

And, mark, to that chapatti naught
 Of ghee† did he apply;
 And much I marvelled one could eat
 A thing so coarse and dry.

Mine angel here recalled how once
 The troubadour divine
 Poor Brother Masseo had rebuked
 For views as wrong as mine.

*Unleavened bread.

†Clarified butter.

And all at once I longed to taste
 That bread so coarse and dry,
 And begged the man a piece and ate—
 Like manna from on high.

'THE CHILD OF LIGHT

Slow, one by one, the stars of night
 They mount and shine athwart the sky
 And fade away;
 Quiet, in the dark, the child of light
 He works and waits, till night go by,
 To greet glad day!

THE SCORNFUL BIRD

What blessings love may bring us,
 E'en love for beast or bird!
 Ah ne'er should I have known it
 But for a bird I heard.

"The birds what makes you love them
 E'er since a little boy?"
 Thus oft my heart had asked me.
 "Because they give me joy,"

As oft I'd answered warmly;
 And now this rich reward.
 Think you my words are childish?—
 Pity the child, O Lord!

Day after day I heard it,
 Though never once for long;
 As soon as I went near it
 The bird would stop its song;

Until a voice rebuked me,
 Saying, "Wretch, and wouldst thou moan?
 This bird the world despises,
 And sings to God alone."

THE TOILER

An old man cleft a mountain,
 Now stopped awhile in pain:
 At once there sprung a fountain;
 He drank and toiled again.

Though dark the night that found him,
 The old man would not rest;
 But many a star was round him,
 As if at God's behest.

Here someone flashed a dagger
 And stabbed him in the back;
 I saw the old man stagger
 And fall—alack! alack!

An angel, soon descending,
 His wound with balm did close,
 And waited, o'er him bending,
 Until the old man rose....

The angel hath departed;
 The vision doth remain,
 To cheer when heavy-hearted,
 To bless when free from pain.

THE NEGLECTED CHILD

There again the child is crying.
 Crawling on all fours and crying;
 He crawls or rolls all o'er the place,
 And soils his body and wee wee face,
 While my heart 'tis all a-bleeding;
 Yet I go about unheeding,
 Though sure his face and cry
 Will haunt me every hour
 Until the hour I die.

Have thou pity, child, upon me—
 Heavy, lo. God's hand is on me;
 And, should thy parents find no grace,
 I'll see no more thine angel face;
 And, the angels me deriding,
 In Her mantle I'll keep hiding
 (She knows, She knows my heart)
 Until the judgment end
 And all the hosts depart.

HOW LONG?

I sit on a stone
 By the roadside alone
 Pondering sadly;

In the grove cooes a dove
 And a lark soars above
 Singing all madly.

And from over the hills
 The slaves of the mills,
 Toiling there daily,
 What though all night they weep on,
 Now past me they sweep on
 Chattering gaily.

Oft a dragon at back,
 On its grim iron track,
 Crawls with foul breath;
 And the incessant roar
 Of the waves on the shore
 Warns me of—death!

And I sit on this stone
 By the roadside alone
 Lulling with song
 The cries of my heart,
 And at gloaming depart
 Musing, "How long?"

RESIGNATION

A lark delirious sings above me,
 "Love me, darling, love me, love me!"
 Song and love is all thy pleasure—
 Sing on, dear bird, sing on.
 Fate has filled me another measure;
 My songs are held in scorn,

My love's repaid with hate—
 But thou, dear bird, sing on,
 And leave me to my fate.

The kine contented, homewards going,
 "Coming, coming!" they are lowing.
 All day long your thoughts were turning
 To the young ones in the shed.
 All in vain my heart is yearning;
 My young ones they have fled,
 My home is desolate—
 But speed ye to your shed,
 And leave me to my fate.

ENVY

I built myself a little shed,
 And lived upon a crust of bread,
 And drank of water for sweet wine,
 Thinking, "To-morrow I'll be dead!"
 And yet a life serene was mine,
 Though none might envy; hearing which
 A neighbour came, a neighbour rich.
 "Pray come in, Sir," said I, "and share
 With me to-day my frugal fare."
 He came in gladly, shared my crust
 And water saying, "Yea, we are but dust!"
 That night my shed was set on fire,
 By whom, not once did I inquire:
 Methought, "To-morrow I'll be dead!"
 And quietly raised another shed.

CHRIST WITH THE CROSS

I see the whole scene—just as 'twas—
And there is mother to aid the child
And light his memory where dim :
The Man of Sorrows with the cross,
The sorrowing painter at a loss
To please his wild and pitiless child,
Who yet shall live to bear his cross,
And there be none to pity him.

The sight another might appall,
But not that wild and fearless child,
Who now by signs makes known his whim :
The painter sighs and changes all—
The fainting Christ is made to fall.
He smiles—that wild and fearless child—
Whose hour shall come to faint and fall,
And no good Simon succour him.

More blood ! more blood the brow must show,
Demands the wild and heartless child ;
And watches, restless all and grim :
The paint and brush again, and, lo !
Profuse the blood is seen to flow.
He laughs—that wild and heartless child—
From whose own heart yet blood shall flow,
While his own children laugh at him !

SAINT ANTHONY'S CHAPEL

A coconut bowl in hand
I'll go all o'er the land,
A-begging go, for love
Of good Saint Anthony :
His chapel on the hill
It makes one sad to see ;
O never will I rest
Until 'tis right again.
What loss, my friend, what loss?
(Begone, thou imp of hell!)
No, let me bear my cross.
Away now, for one year,
From town to town to roam.
Goodbye, O children dear !
Goodbye, my happy home !

But what am I to say
To folk to whom I go?
Ne'er thought of it before ;
O yes, I know, I know—
Just this at every door :
"Good folk, an alms from ye
For poor Saint Anthony."
Away then, fool, away !
To him that flies from sin,
O good Saint Anthony,
How soon doth Heaven begin !

LAKSHMI

Goan Fiddler—O meri rani, amku deo tora pani.*

Lakshmi—I speaking English, saib.

Goan Fiddler—Very well, my English-speaking daughter, give me then a little water.

Lakshmi—Why little? drink plenty much. All peoples liking water of this well.

Goan Fiddler—Many thanks. Never expected to find in this out-of-the-way village a Hindu girl speaking English. And nice English too you speak, my daughter.

Lakshmi—I going to English school in Poona. "Smart thing, that goldsmith's daughter," teacher always saying. I no girl, saib, I marry.

Goan Fiddler—I know it, and have a child too—quite a beauty like its mother. You must let me see it.

Lakshmi—No, no, I have no got child, saib. You make me quite shame. Where you going, saib?

Goan Fiddler—There's no knowing where I may be going, so large is the sum required to put the chapel in repair. But God is great. For a handful of this rice people give me a handful of money. Rajah Balaram gave one hundred rupees. The rani is going to have a child after all. God is great, I say.

Lakshmi—And what they doing with the rice?

Goan Fiddler—Wonders, my daughter; mostly curing sick people.

*O my rani, give me a little water.

Lakshmi—Curing babies' dysentery, saib?

Goan Fiddler—O yes, any sickness of anyone.

Lakshmi—Please give me some, give me some, good saib. I giving you one rupee. Baby getting dysentery.

Goan Fiddler—But you have no baby, my poor daughter.

Lakshmi—I begging pardon thousand times. I afraid you making jadhoo,* and speak lie—begging pardon, good saib.

Goan Fiddler—Be not afraid, my good daughter. Take this rice, and, should your child be cured, give me what you like when I return this way next month. God bless you, my daughter!....

[*Solus*—Enough to tempt a saint!
So simple too and kind:
“I no girl, saib, I marry.”—
Indeed I must not tarry
Or look behind.

SAINT ANTHONY'S RICE

Rupees one thousand!—why,
I'm quite a millionaire;
One thousand in one month!
Now soon in good repair
The chapel it shall be.
It is that mission priest—
A learned man is he—
Has brought me this success,
He preached so at the feast
Of great Saint Anthony.

*Magic.

Good luck it chanced to fall
 The day my work begun—
 Well done, I say, well done!

A learned man is he,
 And with his searching eyes
 Begins to look at me
 And says: "A servant you
 Of good Saint Anthony?
 You live with mummies then
 And visions beautiful,
 The envy of all men?"—
 "The hermit saint, mean you?
 And scourge myself and pray
 And starve too all the time?
 I'm only fit, they say,
 For spinning yarns in rhyme.
 And how could I behold
 The visions and not sin?
 Harmless enough I look,
 Without, but look within—
 Good father, pray for me!"
 I say, and slip away
 To escape his searching eyes,
 For shrewd is he as wise.

Doubtless 'tis due to him
 My fame has gone abroad,
 And town and village now
 Think more and more on God;
 And folk from every part
 They run to welcome me.
 But what is it I give?
 A handful of this rice.

What think you I receive?
 Why, handfuls of bright coin—
 Rupees, annas, or pice.
 What wonders manifold
 The Saint is working too,
 If half of what is told
 Be true!—but here's a proof;
 See what a widow writes:
 "The Saint has heard my vows,
 My son has left off drink,
 In peace again my house.
 God speed you and your work!"
 Think, doubting Thomas, think;
 Your doubts are given the lie—
 Praise be to God on high!

IN THE GHATS

It is a hillman, with his wife
 And dusky children three,
 Upon his way to yonder plains—
 To find some work, says he.

To-night he rests upon this hill,
 His asses all around;
 His household goods and household gods
 In little bundles bound.

The hungry beasts they seem to know
 There's famine in the land,
 For none dare eat the things there lie
 But from their master's hand.

And all is quiet about the place,
 And quietly I depart :
 "A glimpse of heav'n in mercy giv'n
 To quiet a troubled heart !"

RETREAT

As down the hill at last I went,
 Not e'en a growl the tiger gave,
 Quiet in the sun the cobra lay;
 Both feared the Master in the slave
 And harmed me not upon my way.

"Men too shali doubtless fear me now,
 For, like the Master's forty days,
 My forty years of close retreat
 Hath not been vain—to God all praise!-
 And I but mean to wash their feet."

Thus thinking safe the plains I reached;
 But, when the homes of men I neared,
 A mob came shouting loud and shrill,
 As if a wild beast had appeared,
 And back they drove me to the hill.

Now all night long the tiger growls,
 As by my cavern mouth he lies,
 And oft with cries of fear I wake;
 But, lo, the more by night the cries
 The more by day the songs I make.

MY WORLD

My world through life had not been wide,
But then the views were broad,
And I had found it passing fair—
Praise be to God!

And now what though my world seem like
A room scarce twelve feet square,
One window shows it e'er so wide
And not less fair.

But widest, fairest sure to be
What time my place of rest
Is six feet deep, for then my world
Shall be God's breast.

DHARNA RIVER
(Near Nasik, India)

Take me, friend, to Dharna River
Where it flows by quiet Nanegaon;
And leave me there to die,
With not a mourner by,
But peaceful scenes around me....

Friend, we've reached the dear dear river;
There the cattle home returning;
They'll cross the gentle tide,
With that small boy as guide,
While doves keep cooing around me.

Leave me now to watch and listen :
 Sweet soft tinklings, how they soothe me !
 One hour 'mid scenes so blest
 And I shall be at rest,
 While Nature watch around me.

THE CORSE

All his life he spun them—
 Foolish dreams, they said ;
 Little now it matters,
 Since his dreams are dead.

Yesteryear a neighbour
 Thus to him said he :
 "Rest thou quiet, good brother,
 What God wills shall be".—

"Long live thou to guide us !"
 No more words he found ;
 Now the guide himself is
 Resting underground.

Thrice the corse I covered,
 Thrice its eyes did close,
 Each time prayed for mercy—
 God no mercy shows.

Once again I'll do so—
 Makes the blood run cold ;
 Wounds so gaping, ghastly,
 Who can safe behold ?

Me the dead man looks at
 With my father's eyes;
 I'll go call the vicar,
 Good is he and wise....

"Dominus vobiscum!
 Come, and have no fear;
 Be he man or demon,
 We shall venture near....

What it means I know not,
 Here I dare not stay;
 Looks so like my brother
 When a corse he lay.

I'll go tell the bishop,
 There's no wiser man;
 Let his Lordship fight him,
 Let him if he can"....

"Benedicat vobis!
 While ye tarry out,
 I'll go see the body—
 Foolish fears, no doubt....

Never, in dreams the strangest,
 Thought the like to see;
 Sure some power unearthly
 Makes him look like me!

Three days lies unburied?
 None will put his hand?
 How he died ye know not?
 Hard to understand.

But the Pope will aid us,
And a saint send down;
From His wrath deliver
This iniquous town”....

Gone are priest and prelate,
Gone too is everyone,
And my weary vigil
Never shall be done!

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